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MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

IN the debate on the 31st May, upon the Catholic petition, there appeared in a division of 146 against 83 to be a majority of 63 against referring the petition to a committee of the whole house.

Thus the Catholics have been once more repelled from the gates of the constitution, and are obliged to take up their residence in that sort of tumble-down half-way house, between rank persecution, and common right, which goes by the name of *toleration*. There is a certain, happy knack of fashionable phraseology, which covers sharp and severe usage in a soft sheath, and which sometimes imposes upon both parties, the party that uses, and the party that is abused. Thus, for example, a man who has perhaps committed the most shameful speculation in office, or who has cheated the public of thousands, is said, in polite company, to have behaved *incorrectly*, as if he had been merely a sorry arithmetician, and made an accidental mistake in giving the sum total of an account. Often have we heard it said, "I am sorry for the poor fellow, very sorry indeed, but he has certainly been very *incorrect*." Thus too, in our political nomenclature, the nature of things is perverted. When Percival talks of *toleration*, what is it but the Leopard, or rather the Cat *Persecution*, which sheathes its claws, and makes all the time a hypocritical purring about love and conciliation. Thus *subjection*, is called *subordination*, and *domination*, is called *ascendancy*, and a claim of *common right* is called an unreasonable assumption of political power. The Birth-right withheld, is changed into a Bonus at the will of the granter, and the pre-

mier, like the premier of Egypt, first peculates a hoard of privilege from the common stock, and then would, from this granary, dole out his graces and free gifts to the People.

In truth the misapplication of terms has had at least as ill consequences in morality as in philosophy. Men are often the very slaves of two or three sounding syllables. Mr. Percival most kindly intimates, in the course of this last debate upon the Catholic question, that he puts not forth half his strength, that he has a host of bigotry in reserve (*he* would call it British spirit) which, when he chooses, he can call forth, but thinks it unnecessary, in the certain victory of the day.

Ah!—we do not doubt it. We do not, in the smallest degree, doubt, that with the help of two magical words placed in proper order, and repeated with proper emphasis, with the two words "*Church and King*," he could raise a social war in these countries. Rhoderic Dhu could not do greater wonders with his whistle. The Literati, and the Laity, and the heads and tails of Colleges, and the proctors and doctors would start up in holy insurrection. The pulpits, as once they were instructed to do, would *again* prolong and magnify the pious clamour. The press would pour forth a swarm of pamphleteers, and grasshopper poets would chirp through all the under wood of Parnassus. Each time, as it were, teems with its appropriate insanity. Old women are no longer burned for witches, but a whole people is distrusted, and partially incapacitated for their belief in transubstantiation.

Little of novelty could be expected in this debate. What we liked as

well, was somewhat of the old proof spirit which distinguished the Irish orator in an Irish house of commons; and indeed one happy effect of this sessional debate upon the Catholic question is to bring, at least occasionally, Ireland, home to the heart, gradually obliterated as it is by expatriation, and the habits of the metropolis.—Immersed in this vast vat of selfishness, and venality, all assume the same tint; the distinctive and characteristic colouring is lost. “*Obliti meorum, obliviscendi et illis.*” “Forgetting their country and by their country forgotten.”

We may even observe in a number of individuals, the progress and different stages of this dereliction. Thus in Edmund Burke, when he had forsaken even the whig aristocracy and told us that “the grand and swelling sentiments of liberty he only, *did not despise!*” even then, he preserved an *hibernicism* of feeling when all the other bright colours of his character were utterly effaced and destroyed. This indeed was preserved in the ground of that character, by the *mordant* of his real religion. His patriotism was rather Catholic, than Irish. In Sheridan, the remembrance of his country, occasionally, not frequently, flashes from his genius, and taste. It appears the imagery of his fertile fancy, rather than the idol of the feeling heart, delighting all who contemplate the sublime, and shifting conuscation, which suddenly sinks into long periods of obscurity and oblivion. And so the thermometer of an Irish feeling may be graduated from the generous glow of Grattan, to the tepid Ponsouby, and thence to the frigidity of Foster, and from that, to the icy insensibility of Canning and Castlereagh, the extreme points of the scale, Irishmen, who when they cannot be ministers still wish to act in the character of mi-

nisterial *suppleants*, and hover like ghosts, about the graves of their departed offices.

In this debate, the genius of Grattan seems to have experienced a rejuvenescence. There was an apprehension that he was wholly translated or *done into English*, but when he apostrophizes liberty with such fervour, we believe he almost forgot where he was standing. “*Liberty!* which, like the deity, is an essential spirit best known by its consequences. *Liberty!* which now animates you in your battles, and lifts you up proudly superior to your enemies. *Liberty!* that glorious spark and emanation of divinity which fired your ancestors, and taught them to feel, like a Hampden, that it was not life, but the condition of living. An Irishman sympathises in those noble sentiments (*here Lord Castlereagh yawned*) wherever he goes, to whatever quarter of the earth he journeyes, whatever wind blows upon his poor garments let him have but the pride, the glory, the ostentation of liberty”—At the conclusion of this period, Mr. Percival with something between a smile and a sneer, would exclaim, “very fine, very fine, *indeed,*” and even someone on the neighbouring benches might venture to give a “Hear him.” Yet we dare to say the orator felt himself a little awkward, when he lost the casual inspiration, and felt how fugitive was the impression of eloquence, such as once agitated, and elevated a whole nation, upon an audience of English financiers, lawyers, and country gentlemen. The Catholic petition of *right*, was rejected.

Nothing however was better calculated to sooth the minds of the Catholics, suffering under this reiterated and we think, on the part of the minister, this contumelious rejection, than the invitation given to their De-

legates on the 8th inst. by an assembly of the first in rank and the most distinguished in talents, under the title of "Friends of *religious* liberty, (we would have added *political* to the word *religious*) at which dinner one of the confidential friends of the Prince Regent presided, and gave the most auspicious hope of future success. We join from this corner, with our hopes, and our prayers, but we confess, that notwithstanding even the sanction of the prince, we fear the muster of Mr. Perceval's corps de reserve. Why should we conceal it? We fear the worst from the intolerant spirit of the people of England, not merely the bigotry of a party, but that of the people. We know that there are numerous and glorious exceptions, but it is with the conviction of experience, and the evidence of melancholy facts, we draw a conclusion, that the mass of the English nation is of high church religion and tory politics, in both, inimical to Catholic emancipation or to constitutional reform. May we be mistaken in our opinion!—but if our opinion be a right one, may it then be the glorious ambition of a PATRIOT PRINCE to enlighten his people with the knowledge of their true interests, to show them that much national prosperity may exist without overbearing monopoly; that perpetual war is not the perfection of human policy; and that the happiness of mankind, either in the individual or in the community, multiplies by participation. The product of labour increases astonishingly by division. Why has not government practised the art of increasing liberty, also, by a just division?

On the 10th inst. a meeting took place in London, of the friends of Parliamentary reform. We have before declared it as our belief, that this event is never likely to take place, but under the compulsion of

extraordinary circumstances, and we acknowledge that, on this question too, we feel apprehension from a certain powerful as well as *popular* bigotry, with respect to the inalterability, and identity of the whole constitution, taken, as it happens to exist, with all its errors, and all its perfections, confounded and consolidated into an idol to be worshipped, not to be meddled with by mortal hands.

We are apt to exclaim against the *Catholic* for his belief in the unity, identity and immutability of his religion. The *Protestant* sets up a civil constitution, dressed with the very same attributes, and feels the same violent prejudices against all who would venture to amend or reform it. This is the *POLITICAL* POPEERY too common in England. They ridicule those who enshrine religion in the bosoms of their priests, from whence its divinity is doled out to the ignorant multitude, and with a similar superstition, they themselves enshrine the British constitution in the pecuniators of the public rights, and in this borough-mongering depository of relics, they idolize the divinity of public liberty, and the integrity of the legislature.

For our parts, we declare ourselves Protestant Dissenters in a *double* sense. We protest against the errors and abuses that defaced and defiled christianity, and therefore acknowledge and glory in the blessing of that great event, the REFORMATION. In the very same manner, and nearly in the same degree, do we protest against, and dissent from, the abuses that have at different times polluted the British constitution, and we therefore shall for ever applaud the glorious REVOLUTION. And when errors, abuses, and crimes again accumulate, and public and private immorality has again corrupted, changed, and adulterated this same constitution,

we shall, with all our souls, hail the happy day of its REFORM and REGENERATION.

It is perhaps our anxiety about reform; that makes us fearful of its success; that makes us more disposed to look to the patriotic patronage of the Prince; than to any warm pursuit on the part of the people. Numerous individuals, we well know, there are, and chiefly in the middle ranks, enlightened and warmed with the subject, sound and staunch whigs, not place-hunting, pendulating, political weather-wise whigs, but seeking the renovation of the constitution of England, in the honesty of their hearts, and with what may be called, both by their friends and their enemies, an inveterate perseverance. Major Cartwright is the representative of this portion of the people. It is only a portion.

The character of the country, taken in the mass, is changed. It is of a different turn and disposition from what it has been. Not only public spirit is diluted, but public taste is degraded. In theatric entertainments, Shakespeare and Sheridan, and Siddons, are driven off the stage by a troop of horse. Dogs, baiting a stuffed bull or bear, attended in the evening with the acclamations of a people, who have, in the morning, been delighted with the persevering pugilism of Moliveaux and Crib. If we get nothing better from abroad, we shall probably import the bull-fights from the peninsula.

As to the press, shall we say that no man can now venture to write freely, until he be put into prison. What is the press but a machine of wood and metal, and a pulp of rotten rags, without being animated by public spirit. It may be turned into a screw for impoverishing the public mind, robbing it of its generous juices, and leaving nothing but flatness and insipidity. How are

we to estimate the spirit of the public journals, when such paragraphs as the one* quoted at the bottom of the page, are circulated through the three kingdoms, and read by the descendants of Russell, and Cavendish, and Hampden?

We say, again, the character of England is changed. It is, we fear, reckless of a reform. "With a revenue of nearly ninety millions a-year, with an army and navy that gives to government the disposal of three thousand commissions per ann. With almost every freeholder, and indeed every third man, by one means or another, brought within the vortex of the influence of the crown, with every thing seeming to be hurrying us into the enlargement and perpetuation of the military system." What are we to calculate upon the success of reform? Will the appeal be attended to, when made to such a people? In England, and Scotland, taken in the mass, patriotism resolves itself into antigallicism. It is hatred of an enemy which instigates, rather than the hallowed love of country, which elevates and inspires. Loyalty is merely antijacobinism, and all the hypocritical admiration of the constitution, but a bigotry of anti-reform. The public passions are all *antipathies*. With

* When the express arrived with the account of Lord Melville's death, on Saturday morning, at the house of Mr. R. Dundas, now Viscount Melville, his carriage was just ready to take his children an airing, (well—what dreadful accident then occurred? Did the horses run off, and was the son to lament the loss of his children, as well as of his father?), the order was in consequence countermanded, the carriage sent to the coachmaker, to have the box taken off, and a dickey put on for the purpose of a servant to sit in, and the present Viscount set off for Edinburgh at three o'clock.—See, for this remarkable event all the public papers of the British empire.

whom or what does Britain sympathise? How does she study to gain affection, to make and to keep friends, to conciliate even her own brethren, who fight for her cause, and die in her battles?

In short, the war itself is the great ANTI-REFORMER. For the purpose of diverting the public mind from the direction of political reform, was it first entered into, and for the same purpose (when all other purposes are found to have failed) will it be carried on. England has been a disciple of war, and is now thoroughly disciplined to it. She is made to believe, and she does believe that all her liberty, and all her rights, and, dearer still, all her property, depend upon it. Will Sir Francis Burdett, or Mr. Brand, or Major Cartwright, or Mr. Roscoe, remove the film of infatuation, or cure this sore malady of the PEOPLE. Alas! like other physicians, they have more will than ability. The Genius of British freedom declines, and verges to decrepitude. It takes a seat beside Horne Tooke, and looks down upon its own sepulchre.

The bill for the interchange of the militia in both countries has passed, and certainly seems to place the Catholics in a severe predicament; to quit the service, or in quitting their country to quit also the exercise of the rites of their religion, no slight means of preserving the reality of it in the mind. Every thing seems done to accomplish the union for the purpose of war, nothing is done to perfect it for the purposes of peace. Before it was passed, it was said that the plan appeared more a military manœuvre than a political idea, proceeding from the bosom of a parental, providential, impartial care, from any consideration of equal relationship to the whole family of the people, any prospective view of liberal and mag-

nanimous policy. Such bills as the present give strength to that prediction. They appear to be passed with the immediate design of sending all the regiments of the line abroad, and ultimately, to change the militia itself into a disposable force.

It has been asserted that there never was any the least infringement of the religious liberty of the Catholics only a prevention of their obtaining the least political power. And that, even now, they will be permitted, by military favour, an attendance upon their own places of worship, although excluded from any legal right of such attendance. But in a country with respect to their religion a desert, in what manner, or under what form will they be able to perform its duties, without a minister of that religion? of what use is even the permitted portion of religious liberty when there is no opportunity of making use of it? Without leaving a priest attached to each regiment, they cannot partake in those rites, which are deemed necessary even to salvation. He is their bible, their blessing in life, their consolation in death. Is it the intention of ministry to convert all the Catholics into Protestants, or to pervert them into infidels? to take them from what they judge a bad religion, by leaving them without religion at all?

We will not do even Mr. Percival the injustice to suppose that the interchange of militia could possibly have been suggested by an apprehension that the safety of Ireland, was, by this means, better secured against invasion. Whoever entertains such an apprehension, most iniquitously and injuriously defames the Irish nation. Whoever asserts it, asserts a falsehood. No, we will not indeed revile, and abuse the enemy with base and opprobrious

appellations, which degrade those who bestow them, not him upon whom they are bestowed. But we will (and in this, at least, we believe ourselves the popular representatives of the whole community) we will defend our country, our homes, our wives and our children against a French invader, to the utmost extremity, to the last drop of blood. What can an *English* militia do more? We know it well. If ever an invasion be made of Ireland, it is for FRENCH purposes alone it will be made, whatever may be the pretext of the invader there can be no doubt of his purposes. Rome professed a desire to emancipate and deliver Greece; for what end? If there be a French party in Ireland, it must be a party of *Frenchmen*. No,—No,—“unkindness may do much,” and their unkindness may defeat our lives, but never will it taint our constitutional loyalty.

It is the malicious artifice of those anti-jacobins, and anti-reformers, and antagonists of Catholic right, that calumniate the country, in order to confound the Catholic question with the antigallican horror which prevails throughout England. Thus they contrive, as in the instance of Mr. Grattan, to impose upon the credulity often associated with great genius, and the cullibility as often attendant upon an excellent heart.

It is by the uninterrupted agitation of this antigallican horror, that all public spirit in Britain has been so long and so successfully repressed, for the purposes of an insidious faction. For the same purposes, this same faction endeavours to associate and assimilate every public redress, every constitutional improvement, with the same overruling impression, until the powers and faculties of the whole nation are, as it were, bound

up by magical incantation, and it stands staring upon the opposite and hostile shore, like a maniac, rather than a man. “Why thus cast off your children?” “They are in league with the enemy.” “Why deal about your blows upon your brethren?”—“They are in conspiracy against my life. They are a French party.”—“Why thus tear to pieces magna charta, and the bill of rights?”—“They are scrolls sent from the enemy.” What! have you no recollection of this man, or this, or this?—“Yes, I know them perfectly well. They are all spies of Bonaparte.”—Unhappy country! Miserable infatuation!—

Human nature is thus constituted. When any passion, even one of the best kind, (under proper regulation) usurps the total and exclusive monopoly of the man, or of the million, all the other affections lose their accustomed aliment, wither, decay, and the person, or the public, under such circumstances, in vulgar but emphatic language, is said to be *possessed*. Thus religion in the Indian Brahman, sits with close-shut eyes, and folded arms, and with all the duties and cares of life, cast, neglected, at his feet. Thus love grows suspicious, thinks every man a rival, harbours vain surmises and jealousies, and torments both itself and the object of its insane idolatry. Thus patriotism, the glory and grandeur of a country, has been seen to degenerate by exclusive cultivation, into a proud, selfish, domineering passion, an intolerance bordering upon persecution, a greedy indulgence of all the vindictive propensities of human nature, against what is impiously and inhumanly called a *natural* enemy. As if God had made men, and divided them into nations, for the sole purpose of waging an intestine

and eternal war against each other.

Deliver us, and our children, from such derangements of the intellect, such depravations of the heart. Grant us that equipoise of powers and passions, which gives us the mastery of ourselves, and that equanimity which makes a nation wage war only for the sake of a just and honourable peace, and even in their necessary efforts against an enemy, never loses sight of the recollection, that he may *eventually* become the warmest friend. This we believe not only the most upright conduct, but also, the truest policy, of a great and generous people. Great Britain will be little without it. Her glory will go off like her gold; and her patriotism will suffer a depreciation, like her paper, in the estimation of the world, and in the judgment of posterity.

Although the Catholic claims have for the present been rejected in parliament, their cause may be not altogether hopeless of eventually succeeding at no very distant period. The address of the Catholics to remove the Duke of Richmond, and W. W. Pole, has been published in the *Gazette*, and noted as "graciously received." This circumstance may be accepted as an indication of the private sentiments of the Regent, and may quiet the fears of those who affected to be fearful of offending him, by praying for the removal of part of that ministry which from prudential motives, he for a time permits to remain in place.

An address from a meeting of the gentlemen, clergy, magistrates, and freeholders of the town and vicinity of Dingle, to Counsellor O'Connell, has brought out an excellent reply from him. They will be found among the documents. Most sincerely do we rejoice to see such sentiments gain ground among our Ca-

tholic brethren, who thus support the cause of religious liberty, on broad principles. Unjustly treated themselves, they, notwithstanding, advocate those rights for others which are denied to themselves.

IS THERE A PUBLIC? Does there exist at present such a decided expression of public opinion, as, if not altogether capable of restraining all undue exercise of power on the part of the class of governors, at least prevents further encroachments by them, on the rights of the people? In Ireland, with the exception of the Catholics claiming the restoration of their undoubted rights, the question must be answered in the negative. The public will is not embodied. In Great Britain symptoms occasionally appear, which demonstrate a restoration of public opinion. The Pittite system had nearly extinguished it, but by slow degrees it is acquiring strength. The Protestant Dissenters, in their united and firm opposition to Lord Sidmouth's bill, showed that a general expression of the public will had a very powerful effect. The struggles for parliamentary reform, we trust, will further elicit a spark of that public spirit, which in better days honorably distinguished the name of Britons. The very opposition made to reform is likely to be productive of good, by exciting attention to this most important subject, and supplying a power of repugnancy to the friends of reform, to assist them to overcome the resistance made by those who draw selfish advantages from public miseries. The Common Council of the city of London had agreed to grant the use of Guildhall to a meeting of the advocates of reform, which was appointed to be held on the 3d inst. Some Aldermen took alarm, and passed a resolution at their board a-

gainst the grant, and a number of persons, who styled themselves the Loyal Liverymen, petitioned the Common Council to revoke the grant, to which that *consistent* body consented, although the Livery of London had the day before in a Common Hall approved of the grant of Guildhall, for the purpose of the meeting, and passed resolutions highly favorable to the cause of reform. The meeting was postponed to the 10th, when it was held at the Freemasons-tavern, but was not so largely attended as was expected. Some from the country returned, perhaps disappointed by the delay in holding the meeting, but a lack of public spirit may probably be more justly considered as the cause of the defection. Some of the noted reformers of 1793, stand aloof, and manifest that they are apostates to the cause. Resolutions declarative of the necessity of reform were entered into, but according, to a previously concerted agreement, no specific plan was proposed. This was a compromise between the two set of reformers, at the head of one stands Thomas Brand, and of the other Sir Francis Burdett, and like all other compromises, appears to have had the effect of enfeebling, Reform, to be of any avail, must be thorough, and all of a piece, otherwise the new parts will not fit with the remaining corruptions. Triennial parliaments will not be of any advantage, unless the elective franchise is kept pure, as far as concerns both the electors and the representatives. The frequent returns to their constituents will not promote political soundness, unless by wise precautions, and the infusion of greater purity into elections, the present evils of contests on such occasions are prevented. Laws might be wisely framed, so as to have a

powerful effect in changing the manners of a people, but, alas! of this very desirable and enlightened system of legislation speedily being accomplished, we cannot at present form high expectations. Instead of a cordial co-operation, and a drawing all together, mutual jealousies and selfish partialities seem likely to frustrate any results beneficial to the country. Probably these nations must still be more miserable before they will be sufficiently instructed to adopt wise remedies.

Pitt's birth-day has been celebrated as usual in London by placemen, pensioners, and contractors, who take this opportunity of applauding and attempting to uphold that system, which cherished abuses by which they have been benefited, while the nation has been impoverished. The venal prints have taken the opportunity of the recent death of Lord Melville to celebrate his merits. He also was one of the worthies of the school of corruption. The supporter of the American war, and the coadjutor of Lord North, readily assimilated in the crusade against liberty in France, and in his friendship to William Pitt; a friendship, which he would have been equally ready to transfer to any person who for the time being held the premiership, or the powers of distributing the favours of the crown. Lord Melville is praised for his services to his country. Even on the most favourable estimate of his motives, and of the value of his services, he was not disinterested. He did not serve his country for nought. While his character allowed him to retain office, and till Samuel Whitbread by his impeachment of him fixed such a stigma on him, that although nominally acquitted, Perceval was afraid to risque employing him again, he clung to place, and possessed no

small share of the plunder of the public purse. These emoluments of office, and his own *sinécures*, and the places and *sinécures* of his son, are the best comments on his disinterested love of country. The Scotch prints have been loud in his praise. Possessing the chief share of patronage in Scotland for many years, he would doubtless have many adherents, but probably few friends, for friendship is too exalted a name for that intercourse of traffic which subsists between courtiers, and between patrons and dependants.

In our last number we noticed the return of the Duke of York to the office of Commander in Chief of the Army. This month Lord Milton brought forward in the house of commons a vote of censure on the advisers of this measure; which was negatived by the large majority of 296 to 47. Many of those whom the powerful conviction of the moment forced into a temporary act of virtue at the period of the investigation, were on the present occasion active in making a hypocritical profession of their recantation; as if ashamed of being for once caught in a right act, they are loud in renouncing all the merits arising from it, and boast of returning into the old track. It augurs ill of a state, and of the maxims of its policy, when the legislators of a country scoff at virtue, and denominate a temporary burst of honesty by the name of puritomania, as if indeed virtue were only a frenzy. This is one of those symptoms of the prevalence of the general corruption of manners, which the moralist views with alarming foreboding. The superficial observer may not minutely mark such traits in the public character, but to those who watch over the progress of public sentiments, this occurrence affords an in-

dication of the mine, which is secretly, but certainly sapping the edifice of the state. The loss of public and private virtue has in all ages preceded and accelerated the downfall of nations. Attempts were made in the course of the debate, to impeach the credibility due to the accusations against the Duke by reason of the infamy of the witness, and the means used to bring forward her testimony. But the charges were proved by corroborative evidence, in great measure independent of the original informer, and we may also recollect that if Mrs. Clarke was bribed to give evidence, she has since been bribed on the other side, to suppress her book of additional evidence. The pliancy of the house was conspicuous on the present occasion, and in forming a just estimate of character, let us recollect that many of the candidates for office were as conspicuous in their obsequious bowings at the shrine of court favour, as the men who are now in place. The opinion of the army was triumphantly referred to in proof of the propriety of the measure, and of their approbation, but it may be easily seen, that men who look for preferment and advantage, from a prince placed at the head of that establishment, cannot be esteemed disinterested judges, when the character of a personage in such a situation was the subject of consideration. To condemn him was not the road to future favours.

An attempt is made in Ireland by the circulation of a printed paper bearing evident marks of the Castle manufacture, and industriously spread through the medium of the post office, to excite the people to address the Prince Regent, thanking him for the restoration of the Duke. So far as the Prince's intentions have been manifested by his conduct, this

is precisely the one act most liable to objection. But the false spirit of exclusive loyalty fastens on the worst, for its own bye-ends, not the honour of the prince. His real friends would thank him for his noble answer respecting the parliamentary influence of the Duke of Newcastle, his having the address from Westminster inserted in the Gazette, and his "graciously receiving the address from the aggregate meeting of the Catholics of Ireland. The Duke of York's advocates afford another instance of the indiscretion, which throughout the whole business has characterized their proceedings. It is injudicious to revive again the recollection of the disgraceful transaction. They talk of bad motives in the accusers, but how stand the defenders? Are they free from suspicion? Stokes, the attorney, by whose evidence Wright was acquitted of the indictment for perjury has wrung from Counsellor Alley a disclosure of the confession made by Stokes, that he expected at least £2000, per annum, for his services in his attempts to restore the Duke. On which side do corrupt motives preponderate? Of the addresses on the present occasion how many are influenced by the hopes of preferment for their friends and relatives in the military line?

Henry Parnell has again brought forward in the house of commons the subject of tithes, but he had a thin auditory, and lost his question to pledge the house to take up the consideration of the subject by a majority of 54 to 29. He however promised to resume the subject in next session. Tithes are most oppressive to the peasantry of Ireland, the great majority of whom have to support two priesthoods. Wellesley Pole has announced that he has given up any endeavours to ameliorate this

system, although he said the subject had occupied his early attention, and been near and dear to him. Thus men persuade themselves to think differently when in and out of office. The overwhelming influence of the church deters statesmen from interference, even when their better judgment points out the necessity.

The three bills introduced into parliament by Sir Samuel Romilly for taking away the capital part of the felony from stealing in private houses and shops, and on navigable canals, after having passed the commons through two divisions, in which he had a respectable majority was thrown out in the house of Lords in a very thin house; only ten Peers voting for them, the ministerial and law lords being decidedly hostile to them. But two bills were permitted to pass in consequence of the petitions from the bleachers of this country and the calico printers in England, by which stealing out of a bleach-green or print-yard are no longer capital felonies, but to be punished by transportation or confinement in penitentiary houses at the option of the judge. Thus one step has been successfully made, which it may be hoped will tend to facilitate the humane, benevolent and judicious plans of Sir Samuel Romilly to reform the criminal law. A consolatory hope is held out that reform will be progressive. Reforms are at first decried and opposed under the dreaded name of innovation. At length in some instances a little is conceded, and then something more, till at the end, the wished for reform is achieved by slow degrees, and the victory of a liberal and enlightened policy over prejudice is completed.

We meet with the following paragraph in the public papers, which deserves attention, as an instance of

bigotry, at a period when we hoped more liberal sentiments had generally prevailed. Although knowledge and liberality are making progress, some stragglers lag behind in the march of mind, and would fain, if they could, bring back the darkness of older times. They mistake the times in which they live, and as far as they have power, would reduce us to endure the fanaticism and intolerance of the days of John Knox : " On the 25th ult. the general assembly of the church of Scotland passed a resolution, that the Sunday School taught by Mr. Muir, in Glasgow, ought to be suppressed, as he entertains most erroneous religious opinions, and if the efforts of the Presbytery are ineffectual, that they should apply to the civil magistrate to enforce their authority. And that to teach school, during service on the Sabbath-day is illegal, and punishable by a magistrate."

A man with a shorter creed than his neighbour's, may benevolently assist to teach the poor to read and spell. Who is to judge, if his opinions are erroneous or just? The assumption of a power to judge in these instances, leads at once to the infringement of the liberty of religious opinions. In this case we have a fresh instance that the church is ready to call on the state to support her authority, and that the desire to persecute is not extinct.

The hopes of the war faction have been again revived, by some expressions of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which pointed to a probability of a rupture between France and Russia, and revived the hopes of another coalition. When will a nation learn wisdom from former errors, and be weaned by fatal experience from cherishing fallacious hopes!

The victories of Almeida and Albuera have been dearly purchased, by such immense losses, as with some to throw a shade of doubt whether victories they may be called. They are at least repulses of the French, but they cost dearly, and will not probably have any beneficial effect on the result of the campaign. Wars form now a question of numbers and finance. France from its superior population can bear a waste, which, estimating human life only as a mercantile speculation, these countries cannot endure on the scale of our comparatively limited population. On this calculation, France bids fair ultimately to succeed.

DOCUMENTS.

As the subject of confinement in penitentiary houses, is closely connected, with the mitigation of the criminal code, we have procured the following copy of a bill introduced into the House of Commons, by W. W. Pole. If transportation or confinement in houses of correction are made effective punishments, capital punishments, at least for inferior offences, may be safely dispensed with, but at present they are not enforced with sufficient strictness. Many sentenced to transportation escape that the expense may be saved, and confinement without a reform in the system of such houses, will but harden, not amend offenders.

A Bill to authorize the punishment, by confinement and hard labour, of persons in Ireland, liable to transportation; and to repeal so much of a former act, as relates to that subject.

Ordered by the house of Commons to be printed, May 17th, 1811.

Whereas by an act of parliament passed in Ireland in the seventeenth and eighteenth years of his Majesty's reign, intituled, "An act to authorise for a limited time the punishment by hard labour of offenders who for certain crimes are or shall become liable to be transported to any of his Majesty's colonies and plantations," it was a-